

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

### **Working Session Minutes of**

**August 21, 2007**

Chairman McArdle called the meeting to order at 4:00PM. Board members present in addition to Chairman McArdle were Boyd Jackson, Richard Gandt, Steve Clark, and Richard Carlson. Of the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Virginia Wilder, & Board Secretary Donna Rich, were in attendance. Other persons present were Parsons Clark and Fire Chief Ron Giovannacci.

**Historical Commission Appointment:** Parsons Clark was invited to the meeting to seek approval from the Board for her appointment. The question was asked as to what prompted her to apply to join the Historical Commission. Ms. Clark explained that she was a History major in college, has been attending the Historical Commission meetings for the past year and taken the Commission minutes. She moved to Topsfield when she purchased the Campbell Estate and has been refurbishing the barn on the property. She is dedicated to the preservation of barns and believes they should be inventoried as are the houses in Town. Ms. Clark would like to encourage residents to research alternative ways besides demolishing of buildings, especially barns, possibly relocating or rebuilding them back. Selectman Gandt asked Parsons whether, in accordance with the Town's bylaw, she has to have been nominated, where possible, by one of the following: the Topsfield Historical Society, the Massachusetts State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, or the Board of Realtors covering Topsfield. Parsons explained that she had not been so nominated. Selectman Gandt suggested that, in accordance with the Board's recent tradition, we hold the vote to appoint until a future meeting. Selectman Jackson made a motion to appoint Parsons Clark to the Historical Commission, Selectman Clark seconded; so voted: 5-0.

### **Fire Department Issues: Overtime & Relationship with Middleton, and Ambulance Service to the Fair:**

**Overtime & Relationship with Middleton:** Fire Chief Giovannacci was asked to address the Board regarding the continued appearance of overtime on the warrants each week. Fire Chief agreed to provide a breakdown by personnel of the overtime issued over the past 14 months to the Board by September 10th. The Chief explained that Middleton has been minus an ALS (advance life support) person and Topsfield was supporting that position until a trained one was available full time in Middleton. It was also clarified that when Topsfield is called to assist in Middleton the SUV is used to transport the ALS paramedic to the scene in the Middleton. If necessary, the Topsfield paramedic will go to the hospital in the Middleton ambulance as there must be two paramedics in attendance. Overtime is not usually paid, only if the Topsfield ALS is assisting after the normal work shift.

Reports of Topsfield responding to Middleton have been reviewed by the Board. In the printed report of FY07 calls provided to Ms. Wilder, before February all EMS calls, including those to Middleton, were coded as 321. After February, Middleton ALS calls were coded as 3242 (ALS Intercept with Middleton Fire). The Fire Chief explained that the FY07 data sheets have since been reviewed and all ALS calls to Middleton have been recoded to 3242.

The Board was provided with copies of current “Mutual Aid Back-Up Ambulance Service” agreements with: the Middleton Fire Department, the Hamilton Police Department and Action Ambulance. Since Topsfield has a contract with Lyons Ambulance Service and Lyons is responsible for responding (either directly or through another party), the Chairman asked what mutual ambulance aid Middleton or Hamilton provide to Topsfield. The Board further questioned why we have a mutual aid agreement with Action Ambulance that is a private, for profit company. Note that the Chief stated that we occasionally received mutual aid response from Middleton, and that Action Ambulance is the new response ambulance service for Ipswich.

The Board was also provided with copies of current “Advanced Life Support Financial Agreement” with: the Middleton Fire Department and the Byfield Fire Department. The Board has concerns that financial agreements should procedurally be reviewed by the Board and approved for signature as they involve policy as opposed to the operation of the Department.

There was also discussion regarding the number of calls that the Fire Department receives from the Police Dispatcher vs. calls directly made to the Fire House. The Fire Chief has concerns with the Micro-system software the Police Department uses to capture the calls and its accuracy. The Police Department uses a “dead-dispatcher” style of reporting calls vs. a “live dispatcher” reporting. The Fire Chief commented that it would be roughly \$100,000 to jointly link the two systems together.

**Ambulance Service to the Fair:** The General Manager of the Fair, Jim O’Brien had sent a letter to the Fire Chief offering the Town the opportunity to “...have your ambulance here [at the Fair Grounds] during the hours of operation [of the Fair]”. Mr. O’Brien offered to pay the Town \$14,000 for this service. Selectman Clark noted that the Town had voted “No” to becoming an ambulance service. The Fire Chief agreed and would inform the General Manager that the answer would be “no”.

Further discussion on financial agreements continued. The Board explained that such agreements are a policy vs. operational decision and must be brought before the Board for approval.

Selectman Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:21PM, seconded by Selectman Jackson; so voted: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Donna Rich, Secretary  
Board of Selectmen’s Office

*Approved as amended at the September 4 , 2007 Board of Selectmen meeting.*